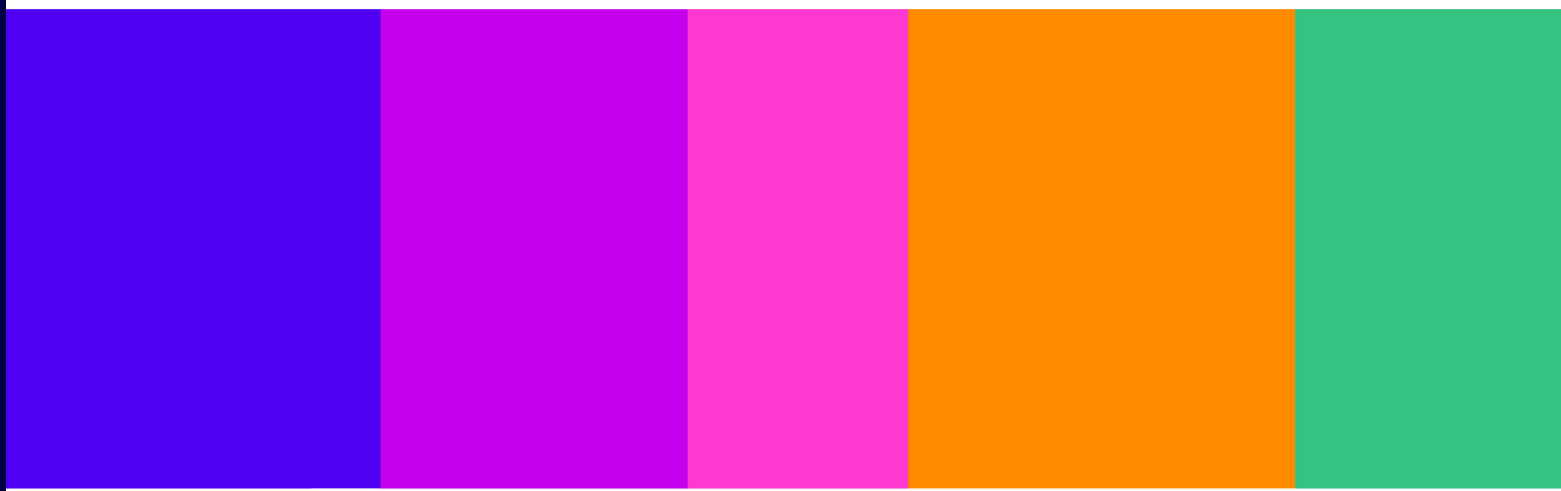


Ofcom Online Experiences Tracker (OET)

Notification of proposed change for OET
Wave 8

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Overview

As a producer of official statistics, Ofcom follows the guidance set out in in [Changing or ceasing to publish official statistics – Government Analysis Function \(civilservice.gov.uk\)](#). In line with this guidance, where substantial changes are made to a piece of research that is established as an official statistic, we must notify stakeholders of the changes that are planned to be made and allow time for stakeholders to provide input or feedback if they wish to.

This document sets out our plans to change the target sample age for Ofcom’s Online Experiences Tracker.

The Online Experiences Tracker (OET) is a twice-yearly quantitative survey that provides Ofcom with data on UK internet users’ attitudes to and experiences of online services, including encounters with and responses to potential harms online.

Alongside helping to inform internal policy decision making, the Tracker also feeds into Ofcom’s annual [Online Nation Report](#). We intend to continue using the Tracker for both of these functions going forward.

What we are changing – in brief

- Now that Ofcom has set up a new Children’s Online Safety Tracker (COST) to capture the online experiences of children aged 8-17, we will be making a change to the Online Experiences Tracker so that this survey only collects responses from UK adult internet users who are 18+ from Wave 8 (June 2025) onwards.
- This means no longer surveying and tracking the online experiences of 13–17-year-olds via the OET, which we have done in previous waves.

Background

Online Experiences Tracker

The Online Experiences Tracker is a quantitative tracking survey that examines people's attitudes to, and experiences of using online services. These attitudes and experiences could be positive or negative, including encountering potentially harmful content online.

The Online Experiences Tracker is a large dataset that offers both breadth and depth. We carry out this research twice a year, using an online panel to sample over 7000 UK internet users, with respondent ages (historically) ranging from 13-84. The tracker includes 50+ questions, which become more focused as respondents progress through the survey, covering 40+ different potential harm types. This large dataset supports both our policy decision making and our annual Online Nation Report, as well as providing an important source of information on people's experiences online in the UK. We also use this data to provide custom deep dives and analysis on particular areas of interest.

The data from the Online Experience Tracker's previous waves can be found on our [Experiences of Using Online Services](#) page. The official statistics for the latest wave, Wave 7, were published in April 2025, and fieldwork for Wave 8 is due to begin in June 2025.

Changes we're making

We will no longer survey individuals below the age of 18 for the Online Experiences Tracker (OET), because we now have a separate survey dedicated to collecting similar data on children (aged 8-17), the Children's Online Safety Tracker (COST). We have previously tracked the online experiences and attitudes of 13–17-year-olds as part of the OET, and so we will exclude this group from the survey process and subsequent data outputs.

This change will be made for Wave 8 of the Online Experiences Tracker, the fieldwork for which will take place in June-July 2025, with publication of official statistics expected for c.October 2025. All subsequent waves will only track the experiences and attitudes of UK adult internet users aged 18+. Once we remove the 13–17-year-olds from our survey, we expect the sample size to remain broadly consistent at around c.7,000 respondents, which includes boost samples of ethnic and religious groups, and UK nations. Wave 7 (Jan 2025) will be the last wave to have tracked the experiences of individuals 13+ (n=7,966) and official statistics for Wave 7 were published in April 2025.

Original quotas and weighting for the Tracker were designed for 13+ and so these will now be adjusted to refocus on 18+ going forward. We have examined the impact of this reweighting on previous data and found any differences in data were generally modest. Therefore, we will not be re-issuing historical data, but users should be mindful when comparing trend from Wave 8 to previous Waves.

We will continue to publish the Online Experiences Tracker data on our [Experiences of Using Online Services](#) page and Ofcom's [Statistical Release Calendar](#).

If you have any questions about this proposal, please get in touch with market.research@ofcom.org.uk